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AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 000114

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SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU AMBASSADOR TO THE GAMBIA CALLS ON
AMBASSADOR

Classified By: Ambassador Barry L. Wells for reasons 1.4(a) (d)

1.(C) SUMMARY: Ambassador from Guinea-Bissau to The Gambia called to request a meeting with Ambassador on a matter of urgency. She presented a concept paper on Guinea-Bissau's Security Sector Reform and pleaded for US support to help resolve the crisis in her country. She referred to the roundtable on GB security sector reform scheduled for April 20 in Cape Verde as only one aspect of the change that is needed to restore democracy in Guinea-Bissau.

2.(C) Ambassador Munira Ribeiro called on Ambassador to present a concept paper on "Roundtable on Guinea-Bissau's Security Sector Reform" under cover of a diplomatic note. She requested that Guinea-Bissau needed the support of the US and international community to resolve the current crisis. She said the Security Sector Reform (SSR) is only one aspect of a the needed change. She insisted the killings of the President and Chief of Defense needed to be investigated fully and not by internal sources. She indicated that without this the election to restore democracy will not succeed.

3.(C) Ribeiro scoffed at the current reports that the President had the CDS killed and was himself then killed by the military. She pointed out that the uneasy relationship between the two was well known and if this scenario was true, President Viero would not "sit around and wait for the military to kill him". She surmised that others used the well known conflict between the two to disguise another plot behind the murders.

4.(C) There are three things that need to happen before Guinea-Bissau can find some degree of stability according to Ribeiro: First, the murders need to be investigated thoroughly to find out who/what was behind them; Note: she commented that this was the 4th CDS to be assassinated in 11 years) Secondly, democratic elections with international oversight; finally, she commented that the GB military needed to be "thrown out". She said many have been there too long and younger ones are not educated. The current military will not accept civilian control, according to her. She said that current CDS Induta is no better and if he stays in charge of the military, nothing will change. She commented that she is completely out of the loop politically. For example, Induta's recent visit to The Gambia was a surprise to her that she read about in the local press.

15. (SBU) Ribeiro commented that the political situation is in chaos and people are desperate. Civil servants have not been paid for months. She said she has not been paid for eight months. Public utilities such as water and electricity are either not available or very sporadic. She said the political process is dysfunctional with 87 people running for president, four of whom are from the same political party.

6.(C) COMMENT: This is the second time in recent weeks Ribeiro has pleaded with Embassy Banjul for US and international assistance with the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. She speaks more from the perspective of an exasperated, frustrated citizen than of a diplomat. She indicated she knows our bi-lateral efforts are managed by Embassy Dakar, and is appreciative, but wanted to plead her case personally for us to continue to help. She commented again that the drug trafficking corruption is rampant throughout the government,

and is largely responsible for this crisis.

WELLS